

IN THE CLAIMS

The status of each claim is provided below:

Claims 1-8: (Canceled).

9. (Currently Amended): A method for producing nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester, comprising the steps of culturing a bacterium belonging to *Escherichia coli* having an ability to produce nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester, in which expression of ushA gene and aphA gene is decreased as compared to a wild type strain by mutating or disrupting the ushA gene and the aphA gene, in a medium to produce and accumulate nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester in a medium, and collecting the nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester from the medium, wherein the nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester is selected from the group consisting of inosine 5'-phosphate ester and guanosine 5'-phosphate ester, and wherein the 5'-nucleotidase activity in the periplasm is substantially eliminated.

Claim 10: (Canceled).

11. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the bacterium is further transformed with the mutant *purF* gene ~~coding for PRPP amidotransferase of which feedback inhibition by AMP and GMP is desensitized of Escherichia coli coding for PRPP amidotransferase in which the lysine residue at position 326 is replaced with a glutamine residue.~~

12. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 11, wherein the bacterium is further transformed with the ~~guaA gene and the guaB gene a guaBA operon of Escherichia coli.~~

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester is inosine 5'-phosphate ester.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the nucleoside 5'-phosphate ester is guanosine 5'-phosphate ester.